

REMARKS

Careful consideration has been given to the Official Action of September 16, 2003 and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-16 on cited art under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claim 17 has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended and is deemed to be free from rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claim 17 has been amended and is rewritten in independent form incorporating the subject matter of claims 1 and 2. In view of the indicated allowability of claim 17 it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is now in condition for allowance. Claim 17 corresponds in scope with the reasons given by the Examiner for allowance. Claims 18 and 19 have been added and is dependent from claim 17 and thereby deemed to be allowable therewith.

With regard to the rejection of the claims on cited art, claim 1 has been amended to specify that the glass layer is supported on the conveyor rollers and is advanced through the tempering furnace such that the glass is heated from above and below. The feature that the glass is supported on the rollers is supported by the specification, for example, at page 6 line 6 and in Figure 1 of the drawing.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 as being unpatentable over US 3,298,810 (McKelvey) in view of US 4,059,426 (Starr). Neither McKelvey nor Starr disclose the feature that the glass lies on the rollers, which rollers form the conveyor. McKelvey discloses an apparatus for bending glass sheets in which apparatus the glasses are positioned in a mould support carriage. Starr discloses a furnace, in which the glass is supported on a layer of hot gas. Thus, the structure of McKelvey and Starr differ totally from the invention.

Further, also the Examiner acknowledges that McKelvey lacks the details of the recirculating conduit. The Examiner refers to Starr to correct the shortcomings of McKelvey. However, Starr in column 1, line 22 refers to gas support furnaces. Furthermore, Starr teaches that even with gas support furnaces placing a recirculating blower outside the furnace is not a good solution. Thus, one skilled in the art would not find such a teaching from McKelvey and Starr that would end up as the solution according to claim 1.

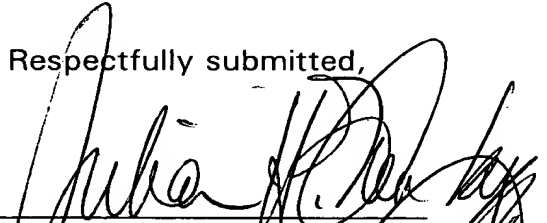
Also, what is very remarkable, it that both McKelvey and Starr lack the very important features of the invention that the pressurized air is led by means of a pipe system into the vicinity of the surface of the glass located upon the rollers, and the air is blown substantially perpendicularly onto the upper surface of the glass. McKelvey only discloses blowing hot gas in an upward direction against the undersurface of the glass intermediate its supported side edge portions. Starr only discloses supporting the glass on a layer of gas and

recirculating the air by utilizing the Coanda effect.

The Examiner also refers to US 4,773,926 (LeTemps et al.) In connection with claims 5-7. LeTemps et al. does not disclose a method of heating glass by blowing air to heat the glass. LeTemps et al. discloses a furnace and mainly concentrates on a tempering unit positioned after the furnace, in which tempering unit cooling air is blown. Thus, the solution of LeTemps et al. differs totally from the invention.

By reason of the above action and comments it is respectfully submitted that the application is in now in allowable condition and favorable reconsideration on its basis is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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